Deuteronomy 27:12-26

Moses and the elders of Israel commanded the people, saying, “Observe the entire commandment that I command you this day. It shall be on the day that you cross the Jordan to the Land that Hashem, your God, gives you, you shall set up great stones and you shall coat them with plaster. 2 You shall inscribe on them all the words of this Torah, when you cross over, so that you may enter the Land that Hashem, your God, gives you, a Land flowing with milk and honey, as Hashem, the God of your forefathers, spoke about you. 3 It shall be that when you cross the Jordan, you shall erect these stones, of which I command you today, on Mount Ebal, and you shall coat them with plaster. 4 There you shall build an altar for Hashem, your God, an altar of stones, you shall not make iron upon them. 5 Of whole stones shall you build the altar of Hashem, your God, and you shall bring upon it elevation-offerings to Hashem, your God. 6 You shall slaughter peace-offerings and eat there, and you shall be glad before Hashem, your God. 7 You shall inscribe on the stones all the words of this Torah, well clarified.

8 Moses and the Kohanim, the Levites, spoke to all Israel, saying, “Be attentive and hear, O Israel: This day you have become a people to Hashem, your God. 9 You shall hearken to the voice of Hashem, your God, and you shall perform all His commandments and His decrees, which I command you today.”

Shavuot
THE CALL OF THE TORAH

This day you have become a people to HASHEM, your God. Rashi (to 39:28) notes that it was only here at the Covenant in the plains of Moab that the people of Israel took responsibility for each other's public actions. From this point on, each person was obligated to safeguard the integrity of Israel against openly committed sins (See also the commentary to 39:28 and Genesis 18:35).

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Commenting on the words *Va'ahata eis Hashem Elokecha*, *Sifrei* states, "*Ahavut ha habriyot* - make Hashem beloved by others."

If it seems that my earlier comparison of love of Hashem to love of our children or spouses was irreverent, listen to the way the Rambam explains this *Sifrei*; "Just as one who loves a person will want others to be as enamored with him or her, so too, one who truly loves Hashem will want others to love Him as well."

Who is the prime example of a person who loved Hashem so much that he spent his life sharing his love of Hashem with others? The Rambam concludes that we should follow the teaching of the *Sifrei* and make Hashem beloved by others, "Like Avraham, our forefather - as the Torah states, 'And the souls that they made in Charan.'" [These souls were the people who were taught by Avraham and Sarah to recognize Hashem, serve Him, and love Him.]

To bring this concept down to modern terms, I will offer you some contemporary examples, with the caveat that the comparison should not be taken literally in any way, shape, or form.

There is an American concept called "enthusiasts," people who will spend their every waking moment obsessing about something that they hold dear. There are, for example, baseball enthusiasts, computer game enthusiasts, and food enthusiasts. These people devote their lives to their interest, and will convey their enthusiasm to anyone who is willing to listen — and often to those who would much prefer not to listen.

*Lehadil* — and I use this comparison only in order to clarify the concept— the Rambam teaches us that Avraham Avinu was a "Hashem enthusiast." He traveled far and wide, spreading the idea of monotheism to the masses, out of his deep love for Hashem. The mitzvah of *ahavas Hashem* obligates each one of us to become a "Hashem enthusiast," and should cause us to want to share our love for Hashem with all who are willing to listen.
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Rashi explains that the word "today" refers not to the specific day on which Moshe delivered this message to Bnei Yisrael. Rather, it means that on each and every day we must feel as if we had just now entered into a covenant with Hashem.

Constant renewal is the key to remaining fresh and energetic in Hashem's service. Otherwise, even the most enthusiastic religious observance will eventually descend into the monotony of a dry routine.

The Piasetzna Rebbe once lamented the fact that albeit blessed to be born a Jew he never had the opportunity to convert to Judaism. Rather than having been born and raised in Hashem's service, he would have preferred to have been able to show Hashem his eager willingness to serve Him by making the conscious decision to convert.

To some extent, we are indeed able to convert ourselves to Judaism each day anew. A convert must commit to observing the entire Torah. If he presumes to accept the entire Torah with the exception of even one detail of any mitzvah, his petition to convert is rejected. So too, we must make a new commitment every day, firmly resolving to observe the entire Torah, leaving no detail of any mitzvah forsaken. Thereby, we renew the covenant Hashem made with our forefathers on Har Sinai, and are converted once again to His service.
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In conjunction with the covenant that Bnei Yisrael would make with Hashem to perform the commandments of the Torah, Moshe tells Bnei Yisrael the following: "Hashkei u'shema, Yisrael, today you have become a nation to Hashem your God and you shall heed the voice of Hashem" (27:9-10). Sforno explains, "Hashkei' — (picture in your mind; 'u'shema' — and contemplate. 'And you shall heed the voice of Hashem' — when you picture this and understand it, then you will undoubtedly heed the voice of Hashem." According to Sforno, the Torah is revealing to us that picturing Torah concepts in our mind can aid us in our fulfillment of the mitzvos. For example, we are commanded on Pesach to feel as if we ourselves left Egypt. This includes conjuring up a picture of this momentous occasion. We should imagine the pillar of fire that illuminated the area, as well as the awe-inspiring procession led by Moshe and Aharon — each family surrounded by 90 donkeys laden with bountiful, all marching out of Mitzrayim in an incredible display of Hashem's might. The same concept applies to the commandment not to forget the revelation at Har Sinai.

"We should imagine the pillar of fire that illuminated the area, as well as the awe-inspiring procession led by Moshe and Aharon — each family surrounded by 90 donkeys laden with bounty, all marching out of Mitzrayim in an incredible display of Hashem's might."
up a picture gives life to these events, and this simulated experience can make an indelible impression on a person’s life.

- Imagining these events is an activity that can be performed anytime and anywhere. Picture the Beis HaMikdash, Akeidas Vayechuk, Yetesias Mitzrayim, Har Sinai, or any of the numerous momentous occasions in our rich history. Take a few minutes to let your imagination fill in as many details as possible. The more time you invest, the more real the event becomes.

- This simple exercise has the power to strengthen one's emunah, and can also aid one's preparations for Rosh Hashanah. A true “picture” of Hashem as the King over the entire world will make it easier to accent His sovereignty during the Yamim Noraim.

(Alei Shur, Vol. II, p. 274)